

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION BONN INFO SECSTATE FROM USBERLIN DTD 16

FEB 1978 QTE

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, BQG, WB, UR

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS THAT SOVIETS HAVE RETURNED CREDENTIALS OF
AUSTRALIAN HEAD OF MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN

1. WELT AND MORGENPOST FOR FEBRUARY 15 CARRIED STORIES THAT
SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV HAD RETURNED CREDENTIALS OF
AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR LOVEDAY TO FRG AS HEAD OF AUSTRALIAN
MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN, FYI - AUSTRALIA MAINTAINS NO
RESIDENT STAFF IN WEST BERLIN SAVE ONE EMPLOYEE TO ANSWER IN-
QUIRIES MAINLY CONCERNING EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA. OFFICER IN
QUESTION, ONE MRS. PULIVER, REFERS ANY SUBSTANTIVE BUSINESS
TO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY, BONN.

2. AMBASSADOR LOVEDAY PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS IN CUSTOMARY
CEREMONIES AT ACA BUILDING IN AMERICAN SECTOR ON JANUARY 25.
COPIES OF HIS CREDENTIALS WOULD NORMALLY BE PASSED TO SOVIET
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EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN, BUT THIS HAS NOT REPEAT NOT YET BEEN DONE.

3. FRENCH MISSION HAS RESPONSIBILITY AMONG THE THREE ALLIES
FOR CONSERVATION OF ORIGINAL COPIES OF CREDENTIALS AND FRENCH
PROTOCOL OFFICER, MR. SYRIGOS, A VETERAN OF 32 YEARS
SERVICE IN BERLIN, THEREFORE CIRCULATES COPIES OF THE
CREDENTIALS TO HIS BRITISH, AMERICAN AND SOVIET

COLLEAGUES. COMMENT: SYRIGOS DOES NOT ALWAYS DO THIS
IN VERY PROMPT FASHION. END COMMENT.

4. FOR EXAMPLE, ON JANUARY 14, WHEN OTHER BUSINESS
TOOK HIM TO SOVIET EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN, SHRIGOS
PERSONALLY HANDED OVER WITHOUT REPEAT WITHOUT ANY COVER-
ING LETTER, COPIES OF CREDENTIALS PRESENTED BY NORWEGIAN,
SOUTH AFRICAN AND LUXEMBOURG HEADS OF MILITARY MISSION.
THE FIRST TWO OF THESE CEREMONIES HAD BEEN IN SEPTEMBER,
1977, WHILE LUXEMBOURG AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN FORMALLY
RECEIVED ON JANUARY 17, 1978. SYRIGOS REPORTS
THAT SOVIET FIRST SECRETARY TYUTYUNOV AT FIRST REFUSED TO
ACCEPT THE SOUTH AFRICAN CREDENTIALS (APPARENTLY BECAUSE
OF THE REGIME'S RACIAL POLICIES) FOR REASONS
WHICH HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH BERLIN. TYUTYUNOV WAS FINALLY
SWAYED BY ARGUMENT THAT SOVIETS HAD JOINED IN THE INVITA-
TION TO SOUTH AFRICA TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY MISSION IN
BERLIN AND THUS SHOULD NOT REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE CREDENTIALS
OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICAN HEAD, AMBASSADOR VON SCHIRNDING.
TYUTYUNOV TOOK THE OCCASION HOWEVER TO DELIVER AN
OBITER DICTA THAT FOR A CHIEF OF MILITARY MISSION TO
SERVE CONCURRENTLY AS AMBASSADOR TO BONN REPRESENTED
"A NEW EFFORT BY THE FRG TO ALTER (POERTER ATTEINTE AU)
THE STATUS OF BERLIN." AS FAR AS WE KNOW, SYRIGOS MADE NO
SUBSTANTIVE REPLY TO THIS REMARK.

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5. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY, BONN MAY
HAVE SENT A COPY OF AMBASSADOR LOVEDAY'S CREDENTIALS
TO SOVIET EMBASSY, EAST BERLIN SINCE CHECKS WITH BRITISH
AND FRENCH MISSIONS HERE CONFIRM THAT NO ONE IN WEST
BERLIN HAS YET FORWARDED CREDENTIALS TO SOVIETS.
EMBASSY MAY WISH TO EXPLORE WITH AUSTRALIANS IN BONN
AS TO WHAT ACTUALLY HAS HAPPENED. WE WOULD NATURALLY
BE GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE A COPY OF ANY LETTER OR STATEMENT
THE SOVIETS MADE IN RETUUNING LOVEDAY'S CREDENTIALS.

6. FRENCH MISSION HERE SPECULATES THAT EPISODE CONCERNING
SOUTH AFRICAN CREDENTIALS MAY HAVE BECOME KNOWN TO PRESS
BUT IN GARBLED FASHION WHICH LED PRESS TO ATTRIBUTE
AFFAIR TO AUSTRALIA RATHER THAN SOUTH AFRICA. THIS
STRIKES US AS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE.

7. TAGESSPIEGEL ON JANUARY 16 CARRIED BRIEF ITEM QUOTING
"ALLIED SPOKESMAN" WHO SAID THAT THESE MATTERS WERE
CONCERN OF THE WESTERN ALLIES BUT NOTED THAT NO CONTACTS
HAD TAKEN PLACE WITH THE SOVIETS REGARDING AMBASSADOR
LOVEDAY.

8. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PRESS QUERIES ON THIS SUBJECT AND GIVEN ITS LACK OF REAL SENSITIVITY WOULD BE INCLINED TO TELL THE PRESS THAT SINCE THE SOVIET UNION ALONG WITH THE THREE WESTERN POWERS INVITED DIFFERENCT COUNTRIES TO SEND MILITARY MISSIONS TO BERLIN, WE HAVE AS NORMAL PRACTICES SENT THE SOVIET EMBASSY THE LETTERS OF CREDENTIALS OF THE NEW CHIEFS OF MILITARY MISSION. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT DONE SO YET WITH RESPECT TO AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR LOVEDAY. THIS KIND OF STATEMENT WOULD IN OUR VIEW RESOLVE THE PRESS CONFUSION ON THE SUBJECT; AT LEAST HERE IN BERLIN, THE FRENCH ARE THINKING ALONG THE SAME LINES. GEORGE UNQTE VANCE

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